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UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

PADIS

PAN AFRICAN DOCUMENTATION
AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

LC/NAIROBI

THIRD MEETING OF THE
REGIONAL TECHNICAL COMMITTEE FOR PADIS:

Report and Documentation

Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

15 - 16 April 1987

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Third Meeting of the Regional
Technical Committee for PADIS

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
15-16 April 1987

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
23-27 April 1987

REPORT

I. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The third meeting of the Regional Technical Committee for PADIS took place at the Headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 15-16 April 1987. The meeting was opened by the Executive Secretary of ECA and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Prof. Adebayo Adedeji.

2. The meeting was attended by the following members of the Committee: Algeria, Ethiopia, Gambia, Niger, Zaire, Zambia, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational and Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Organization of African Unity. Attending as an observer was the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

3. In the absence of the Executive Secretary, who serves as chairman ex officio of the Committee, Zambia was designated to chair the meeting.

4. The meeting adopted the following agenda, amending the draft provisional agenda (ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/1/Rev.1) by the addition of an item entitled "Report from Subregional Committees and United Nations bodies and agencies concerned with information systems."

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Matters arising from previous ECA meetings
4. Progress in programme implementation
5. Report on the financing of PADIS
6. Report from Subregional Committees and United Nations bodies and agencies concerned with information systems
7. PADIS strategies for the period 1987-1991 and workplan for 1987-1988
8. PADIS Medium-term Plan for the period 1990-1995
9. Any other business
10. Adoption of the report
11. Closure of the meeting

II. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

Opening of the Meeting (agenda item 1)

5. In his opening address, the Executive Secretary pointed out the shortcomings of the information infrastructure in Africa which had become apparent in the preparation for the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa. This in turn clarified the need for strengthening the region's information systems in the context of follow-up to the United Nations Programme of Action for African Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD). In this regard, he called upon PADIS to intensify its assistance to member States in information systems development. In reviewing the progress made by PADIS in the implementation of its programme, he noted that while its roles were expanding in response to requests from member States, its present resources were insufficient to meet the demand. To that end, he suggested that Governments increase their contributions, particularly through the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development. He set forth the problem of the organization status of PADIS, for which solutions would be proferred to the meeting in the draft Medium-term Plan for 1990-1995. In conclusion he underlined PADIS' potential for sustained development of information systems in support of African economic recovery and development.

Matters arising from ECA meetings (agenda item 3)

6. A representative of the Secretariat introduced document ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/2. Regarding this document some representatives suggested that in implementing its programmes in Africa, PADIS should be aware of the activities of organizations such as the Pan African Telecommunication Union (PATU), whose activities were in related fields.

7. It was also suggested that PADIS review the activities of UNESCO's Committee on Harmonization and Standardization in relation to those of the newly-created Standing Committee on the Harmonization and Standardization of Documentation and Information Systems at ECA-Sponsored Regional and Subregional Institutions, including ECOWAS.

8. The meeting further stressed the need for harmonization of PADIS activities with those of other organizations such as UNESCO and suggested that PADIS activities should focus specifically on its mandated area, namely, development information. The initiative taken at the Meeting of Vice Chancellors was commended, in view of the importance of including information produced at African universities and institutions of higher learning in PADIS data bases.

Progress in programme implementation (agenda item 4)

9. The secretariat introduced document ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/3 on progress in programme implementation during 1986-87. Details were given on activities carried out in the areas of data base development and user services; advisory services; networking and training. Further detail was provided on follow-up actions taken on the recommendations set out by the RTC at its second meeting.

10. In ensuing discussions, the representative of the OAU informed the meeting of the point-to-point data transmission link that had been installed between PADIS and the OAU secretariat permitting direct access to data bases. He added that the OAU was one of the sponsors of the prefeasibility study on PADIS and indicated his organization's wishes to see the co-operation between the OAU secretariat and PADIS strengthened.

11. The representative of Algeria and the North African Subregional Technical Committee for PADIS, referring to the progress made in developing and acquiring data bases, indicated that reference data bases by themselves were insufficient to meet the needs of users; full-text document delivery was necessary. The Secretariat explained that some of the reference data bases such as those developed by PADIS and those acquired from IDRC and the World Bank were supported by document delivery in hardcopy or microfiche media. For the remaining data bases (those of LABORDOC, AGRIS, etc.), the user had to contact the source.

12. The representative of IDRC posed a question regarding the identification and selection of national focal points. The need for guidelines to assist member States in the identification of focal points was underscored. Some delegations felt that the ECA Conference of Ministers could be used as a forum to solicit the designation by member States of their focal points. The Secretariat informed the meeting that the Conference of Ministers had in its resolutions urged member States to do so. Unfortunately, the degree of response still was not satisfactory. It was suggested that more action programmes in the form of pilot projects be implemented to upgrade existing centres to a level that would permit their ready participation in PADIS.

Report on the financing of PADIS (agenda item 5)

13. A member of the Secretariat introduced document (ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/4) and pointed out that during the period under review PADIS had made intensive efforts to secure financing for the implementation of the project. He reported that the request submitted to the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa for the period 1987-1997 totalling US$ 5.27 million had been scaled down to US$ 3.675 million for the period 1987-1991. He further mentioned that funds had been secured from ECA and IDRC. After four years of negotiations the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States had finally agreed to finance PADIS activities in the subregion under an overall project to be executed by UNESCO, he said. Other possible bilateral donors were also mentioned along with a recent UNESCO proposal to prepare a joint project document aimed at strengthening subregional centres in sub-Saharan Africa. With regard to requests submitted to ADB and EEC, he indicated that no commitment had yet been received from ADB nor EEC. However, ADB indicated that it was unlikely to give direct support but would consider purchasing information services from PADIS. EEC had made it known that requests under the Lome III Convention should not only be in line with the established priorities but should also be submitted by member States using appropriate mechanisms for accessing such funds.

14. He explained that despite the on-going United Nations financial crisis directing the Secretariat to cut its professional-level posts by

15% - 25%, ECA had retained all the regular budget posts at PADIS. In addition Zambia and Zaire had made major financial commitments for the establishment of the subregional centres based in their countries.

15. In discussion it was suggested that other bilateral donors be approached, in particular the Scandinavian countries. In response to a question raised about the proportion of funds devoted to travel in the project document submitted to the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa the Secretariat clarified the percentages devoted to various project elements, (replacing para 4 of document ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/4 because the project document had been revised since the writing of the document under consideration). The total amount of the revised submission was US$ 3.675 million, with 43% devoted to project personnel at the professional level, 15.5% for administrative support staff, 6.2% for travel, 17.9% for training, 14% for equipment and 3.5% for miscellaneous. Information on the staffing of PADIS was also presented.

Reports from Subregional Technical Committees and United Nations agencies and bodies concerned with information systems (agenda item 6)

16. The representative of Algeria presented the report of the meeting of the North Africa Subregional Committee for PADIS (ECA/MULPOC/Tanger/E.VIII/20) which was held in Tangiers, Morocco on 24 March 1987. The Subregional Committee had directed Algeria to outline a study of the adaptation of PADIS to changing realties and to propose this study to the Regional Technical Committee.

17. The representative said that the proposed study should be geared towards the future of PADIS and how it could best serve the changing needs of its users. The study should include an assessment of rapidly changing technologies in information systems and how they could be utilized by PADIS, how to deliver to users the kinds of information they need in the formats they wanted, how the activities could be financed and how the network should operate. Arabization and the organizational status of PADIS would be important elements of the study. He suggested that a study group of member States, but also including international organizations and donors, should be set up. The study group would use all previous studies on PADIS, including the UNDP Evaluation of 1985, as background documents in formulating the future objectives of the project; the report of the study would be presented to the next meeting of the Regional Technical Committee.

18. The representative of UNESCO supported the need for the study, particularly as it would help to clarify the objectives of PADIS and eliminate what he saw as duplication of efforts between PADIS and UNESCO. The Secretariat added that the ECA Executive Secretary had also requested a study on the possible options for the future of PADIS.

19. There was general consensus on the need for the study, to comprise the elements of the organizational and financial status of PADIS, its adaptation to changing user needs, telecommunications and new technologies and Arabization. A working group consisting of Algeria, PADIS, UNDP and IDRC was appointed to develop the modalities for undertaking the study. It was suggested that the terms of reference for the study be

dynamic so that the experts could add additional topics at their discretion.

20. Regarding reports from other subregions, the signing of the agreement for the East and Southern Africa Documentation and Information System (ESADIS) in January 1987 was noted as well as the decision taken by the Meeting of Plenipotentiaries of States Members of the Gisenyi and Yaounde-based MULPOCS on the creation of a Central African Documentation and Information System (CADIS) meeting in Addis Ababa 10-11 April 1987 to accept the offer of Zaire to house the subregional centre in Zaire. The Government of Zaire had accepted to bear the investment and start-up costs for CADIS. With regard to the West African Documentation and Information System (WADIS), the Secretariat explained that progress was being made in the negotiations with the Government of Niger for WADIS' establishment; the centre would be housed at MULPOC facilities in Niamey, where site planning was underway.

PADIS strategies for the period 1987-1991 and workplan for 1987-1988 (agenda item 7)

PADIS Medium-term Plan for the period 1990-1995 (agenda item 8)

21. In view of the fact that both of these agenda items dealt with the future of PADIS, they were presented together. The secretariat introducted document ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/5 relating to agenda item 7 and ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/6 relating to agenda item 8. Agenda item 7 dealt with the immediate future (through 1991), for which financing of PADIS activities was relatively certain. However, beyond this period major questions remained about the future and financial status of PADIS. The 1985 UNDP Evaluation Mission had proposed three alternatives for the future status of PADIS: the first was for ECA to become a regular part of ECA, with the bulk of its activities financed from the regular budget of the United Nations; the second was for PADIS to become an autonomous intergovernmental organization; the third was to combine elements of the first two, - for PADIS to be associated with ECA, but also to remain a measure of autonomy by financing some of its activities itself, as well as drawing on contributions from member States and international, bi-lateral and other donor sources.

22. The Secretariat explained its preference for the third course of action. Given the United Nations financial crisis which was not expected to abate, it would be unrealistic to expect that the United Nations regular budget would be able to cover the technical assistance activities of the project. The insecure financial situation of many intergovernmental organizations which drew their support from member States' contributions also made this alternative unrealistic. Thus, to move towards the third solution which foresaw an increased contribution from the United Nations regular budget, it was necessary for PADIS activities to appear in the Medium Term Plan for the period 1990-1995 being proposed to the General Assembly. Under the proposed plan, all PADIS activities would be drawn together into two subprogrammes, the first of which would be to render word and data processing services to the ECA secretariat, while the second would comprise the technical co-operation activities of the

network and system. Acceptance of the Medium Term Plan was the basis for the preparation of the biennial work programmes and budgets.

23. In the discussion of PADIS' future organizational and financial status, representatives were concerned with increasing contributions from member States to reduce reliance on present donors. IDRC stated that its continued support would be directed more to activities taking place in the member States rather than at the Central Co-ordinating Office. The initiatives of Zambia and Zaire in making financial contributions to PADIS were commended and recommended to others. OAU indicated its willingness to encourage member States in this regard. UNESCO proferred the model of the International Programme for the Development of Communications as one which PADIS could follow. This was based on clarity of programme conception which would lead, he felt, to increased support from the United Nations regular budget as well as voluntary contributions from member States.

24. UNESCO raised the issue of what it regarded as unnecessary duplication of effort between PADIS/ECA and UNESCO/PGI, notably in the area of advisory services in information policy and in training. He felt that UNESCO had the earlier mandate in these areas, which were areas of special competence for UNESCO. He explained that UNESCO and PADIS had been meeting since 1982 to try to co-ordinate their efforts. In response, several representatives said that they felt that there were distinctions to be made between the approaches of UNESCO and PADIS that allowed room for both to operate in the region. The approach of PADIS which attempted to incorporate both numeric and non-numeric data and information was welcomed, as well as the efforts of PADIS to disseminate many of the norms and standards that UNESCO had developed. The consensus was that since demand far exceeded available resources, there was sufficient scope for both organizations to conduct their work in the area of information systems in Africa without duplication of effort.

25. A draft resolution was introduced to the Committee for its consideration to be submitted to the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole. It was decided to include references to the study of the future of PADIS proposed by the Committee, as well as to contributions made to PADIS by Zaire, Zambia and UNESCO. UNESCO expressed its reservations to the operative paragraph calling upon PADIS to continue its on-going activities and to extend them into other areas, feeling that this should be withheld until the results of the study were available. However, the paragraph was accepted by consensus.

Any other business (agenda item 9)

26. The Secretariat introduced a document entitled "Criteria for Designation of PADIS National Participating Centres by African Member States," which was meant to assist member States which had not already done so to identify a national focal point for participation in the PADIS system and network. In discussion, it was suggested that it should be specified that PADIS was concerned with socio-economic information and documentation affairs. It was also pointed out that use of the word "centre" was restrictive, since the institution could take many different forms, including either a central institution or a co-ordinating body for

a series of decentralized entities. It was further noted that the criteria should stem from a description of the roles and functions such focal points were to play. It was decided that the secretariat would take into account all the points raised to revise the document and send it to the Regional Technical Committee for comments, after which the final version would be circulated to member States.

27. The working group (para 19 above) established to define modalities for the study of the future of PADIS introduced a document entitled, "Terms of Reference: Study to Update the Organizational Status, Structure and Delivery Mechanisms of PADIS in the Light of New Techno-Economic Realities." The background recommendations and scope of the study were accepted as presented in the document; however, it was decided that, with PADIS acting as secretariat and co-ordinator of the report, the Regional Technical Committee should take over any future tasks that had been assigned to the "Ad Hoc" Committee in the working group, that is, review of the study on the organizational status of PADIS, review of terms reference and selection of consultants and review of the final study. PADIS was given the mandate to seek funds from extrabudgetary sources, especially from UNDP and IDRC, for the carrying out of the study.

Adoption of the report (agenda item 10)

28. The draft report was presented. Amendments were presented regarding correction of figures and additions of items regarding establishment of subregional centres. The report was adopted as amended.

Closure of the meeting (agenda item 11)

29. In closing the meeting the Chairman thanked all who had been involved in the preparation and servicing of the meeting and commended the secretariat for the excellence of its work. He stressed that member States participated in the Committee because they believed strongly in the work of PADIS, and he hoped that donors would respond favorably to requests for funding submitted to them.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

30. The Regional Technical Committee, in view of the importance of a study to guide the future of PADIS, recommends that, as per the terms of reference adopted by the Committee, PADIS act as secretariat and co-ordinator for the study on the organizational status, structure and delivery mechanisms of PADIS in the light of new techno-economic realities and that it seek extra-budgetary sources for the funding necessary to carry out the study, whose findings should be presented to the fourth meeting of the Regional Technical Committee.

31. The Regional Technical Committee, recognizing the vital role of the Subregional Centres in the PADIS system and network and noting the progress made towards the establishment of ESADIS and NADIS, requests PADIS to work closely with the Government of Zaire, which has agreed to house CADIS and to bear its investment and start-up costs, and with the Government of Niger to conclude agreements for the establishment of the respective centres in order for them to become operational as soon as possible.

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Third Meeting of the
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for PADIS

15-16 April 1987
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Matters arising from previous ECA meetings
4. Progress in programme implementation
5. Report on the financing of PADIS
6. Report from Subregional Technical Committees and other United Nations bodies and agencies concerned with information systems
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9. Any other business
10. Adoption of the report
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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

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15 to 16 April 1987
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PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting

2. Adoption of the agenda

The meeting will adopt an agenda and programme of work.
(Documentation: ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/1/Rev.1 and ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/Inf.2)

3. Matters arising from previous ECA meetings

A number of meetings and conferences whose deliberations were of relevance to the work of PADIS have been convened since the Regional Technical Committee had its second meeting in April 1986. Prominent amongst such meetings were: the seventh session of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole and the twelfth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers; the seventh meeting of Chief Executives of ECA Sponsored Institutions; the meeting of Plenipotentiaries from Central African Governments on the Establishment of CADIS; the meeting of Vice-Chancellors and Rectors of African Universities and Institutions of Higher Learning and the last series of meetings of MULPOC officials and legislative organs. The meeting will be provided with a summary of the outcomes of these meetings as they relate to the work of PADIS. (Documentation: ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/2).

4. Progress in programme implementation

The meeting will be provided with a progress report on the activities of PADIS. It may wish to examine the performance of the Project in the areas of: assistance to member States, the establishment of subregional centres, the provision of user services, delivery of training, the creation of data bases,etc. The meeting will also consider follow-up actions taken on the recommendations it set out at its last session. (Documentation: ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/3).

5. Report on the financing of PADIS

The meeting will be provided with a report on the status of negotiations being pursued with prospective donors and on the extent and composition of funding already acquired. (Documentation: ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/4).

6. PADIS strategies for the period 1987-1991 and workplan for 1987-1988

Further to Resolution 581 (XXI) of the ECA Conference of Ministers and Recommendation II/5 of the Committee the meeting will be provided for its consideration and approval, with the strategies (1987-1991) and workplan (1987-1988) drafted for the implementation of the PADIS programme. (Documentation: ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/5).

7. PADIS Medium-Term Plan for the Period 1990-1995

The United Nations Secretariat is in the process of preparing its Medium-Term Plan for the period 1990-1995 which will be approved by the General Assembly. Draft plans for programmes and subprogrammes, such as those implemented by PADIS, are to be submitted to intergovernmental bodies for comment and approval. The comments will then be incorporated into the revised plans. In this context the RTC is asked to review the PADIS plan for the period 1990-1995. After review by the RTC, the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole will also view the PADIS plan as part of the overall ECA plan. (Documentation: ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/6).

8. Any other business

9. Adoption of the Report

The meeting will adopt the report it will submit to the eighth meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole and the thirteenth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers. (Documentation: ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/7).

10. Closure

The meeting will come to an end on 16 April 1987 upon conclusion of its business.

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15-16 April 1987
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PROGRAMME OF WORK

Wednesday, 15 April 1987

Morning session

0900 - 1000	Registration
1000 - 1030	Opening of the Meeting (Agenda item 1)
	- Address by the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Prof. Adebayo Adedeji
	Adoption of the agenda (Agenda item 2)
1030 - 1100	Coffee break
1100 - 1130	Matters arising from previous ECA meetings (Agenda item 3)
1130 - 1200	Progress in programme implementation (Agenda item 4)
1200 - 1300	Report on the financing of PADIS (Agenda item 5)
1300 - 1500	Lunch break

Afternoon session

1500-1600	Reports from Subregional Technical Committees and other United Nations agencies and bodies concerned with information systems (agenda item 6)
1600 - 1630	PADIS strategies for the period 1987-1991 and workplan for 1987-1988 (Agenda item 7)
1700 - 1800	PADIS Medium-Term Plan for the Period 1990-1995 (Agenda item 8)

Thursday, 16 April 1987

Morning session

0900 - 1000	Any other business (Agenda item 9)

Afternoon session

1600 - 1700	Adoption of the report (Agenda item 10)
1700 - 1730	Closure of the Meeting (Agenda item 11)

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Third Meeting of the
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for PADIS

15-16 April 1987
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

REPORT ON MATTERS ARISING FROM ECA MEETINGS

1. Since the last meeting of the Regional Technical Committee a number of meetings have taken place which affect the PADIS work programme. These include the Seventh Meeting of the ECA Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole (TEPCOW), the Twelfth Meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers, the seventh meeting of Chief Executives of ECA-sponsored Subregional and Regional Institutions, the Third ECA/Association of African Universities Conference of Vice-Chancellors, Presidents and Rectors of Institutions of Higher Learning in Africa and the tenth meeting of the legislative organs of the Niamey-based MULPOC.

Seventh Meeting of TEPCOW

2. The Seventh Meeting of TEPCOW (Yaounde, April 1986) received the report of the second meeting of the Regional Technical Committee for PADIS. TEPCOW stressed the need for the effective operation of existing national information centres within the PADIS work programme and took note of the report. It also drafted a resolution relating to PADIS for adoption by the Twelfth Meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers.

Twelfth Meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers

3. At the Twelfth Meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers, Zaire expressed its desire to host the Central African Documentation and Information System (CADIS).

4. The meeting adopted resolution 581 (XXI) on PADIS whose operative paragraphs: (1) adopted the report of the second meeting of the RTC and took note of the work programme for 1986-1987 contained therein; (2) expressed its thanks to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) for their evaluation exercises and continued financial commitment to PADIS; (3) expressed expressed its appreciation to the Governments of the Federal of Germany, France and to the African Development Bank for their interest in financing elements of the PADIS programme; (4) expressed its thanks to the League of Arab States for having accepted to house the North Africa Documentation and Information System (NADIS) at the Arab League Documentation Centre (ALDOC) for a period of three years; (5) requested the Executive Secretary to enter into negotiations with the League of Arab States for the implementation of NADIS; (6) expressed its appreciation to all international organizations, in particular UNESCO, for their past and prospective assistance; (7) invited the Yaounde and Gisenyi-based MULPOCs to finalize arrangements for the establishment of CADIS; (8) requested the RTC to submit to the Commission at its twenty-second session [1987] a strategy and workplan for the period 1987-1991; (9) called upon African countries members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of States to approach the European Economic Community so as to enable PADIS to have access to funds earmarked for regional projects under the Lome III Convention; (10) called upon other African countries, particularly members of the RTC, to approach the EEC to obtain financing for PADIS; (11) called upon the Governments of the Niger and Zambia to facilitate the setting up of the West Africa Documentation and Information System (WADIS) and the East and Southern Africa Documentation and Information System (ESADIS), respectively; (12) requested the

administrator of UNDP to take the necessary measures to ensure the approval of a project for NADIS and mandated the Chairman of the North Africa RTC for PADIS to approach UNDP for this purpose; (13) requested the ECA Executive Secretary to continue and intensify the negotiations with donor agencies to secure financing for the third phase of PADIS; (14) invited the Executive Secretary to carry out the necessary consultations with all ECA-sponsored institutions as well as with international and regional organizations active in the information and documentation field in Africa in order to harmonize information and documentation programmes and establish co-operative links in this field; and (15) requested the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the progress in the implementation of this resolution to the Commission at its twenty-second session.

Meeting of Chief Executives of ECA-sponsored Institutions

5. At the Seventh Conference of Chief Executives of ECA-sponsored Regional and Subregional Institutions held in Tripoli (24-27 January 1987) the Standing Committee on the Harmonization and Standardization of Documentation and Information Systems of ECA-Sponsored Regional and Subregional Institutions (SCOHSDIS) was established. The Committee, which will be convened anually, is to monitor progress made in the harmonization and standardization of documentation and information systems of all ECA-sponsored regional and regional institutions, including ECOWAS. Formal agreements will also be worked out for the institutions to participate in the PADIS regional network. PADIS will serve as the Convenor of the Committee which will report to the Annual Conference of Chief Executives.

Meeting of Vice Chancellors of African Universities and Institutions of Higher Learning

6. At the Third Conference of Vice-Chancelors, Presidents and Rectors of Institutions of Higher Learning in Africa held in Harare, 19-21 January 1987, PADIS suggested ways to establish a technical process for collecting and disseminating theses of African universities in the region. PADIS also set forth a plan for co-operation with African universities in library and information science and education. In view of the importance of the utilization of information in the development process in Africa, the meeting recommended in the "Harare Statement on the Role of Africa's Institutions of Higher Leaning in Africa's Economic Recovery and Development" that African institutions of higher education make available to PADIS all theses and dissertations produced to date on development questions and set up mechanisms for co-operation in the training of information and documentation personnel in the region's universities, in co-operation with PADIS.

Meeting of Niamey-based MULPOC legislative organs

7. At the meeting of the legislative organs of the Niamey-based MULPOC held in Ouagadougou in February 1987, PADIS detailed efforts that had been made towards the establishment of WADIS in Niamey. It is expected that the agreement for the setting up of WADIS will be signed between ECA and the Government of Niger in 1987.

5. At the time of this writing the meetings of the legislative organs of the other MULPOCS and the meeting of Plenipotentiaries from Central African Governments on the Establishment of CADIS had not yet taken place. Decisions taken by these meetings will be reported verbally to the RTC.

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Third Meeting of the
Regional Technical Committee
for PADIS

15-16 April 1987
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

REPORT ON PROGRESS IN PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

I. REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

1. During the period since the last meeting of the Regional Technical Committee, the Pan African Documentation and Information System (PADIS) continued its efforts to expand its information system for delivery to member States and to develop national, subregional and regional information centres and infrastructure.

2. The activities of PADIS mainly focussed on four major areas:

a) the development/enhancement of data bases, as well as the strengthening of information services to users;

b) the provision of advisory services as technical assistance in information programmes for the benefit of member States and regional/subregional institutions;

c) network building through the establishment and strengthening of national, subregional and regional information and documentation centres;

d) the provision of training for member States and regional/subregional institutions.

a. Data base development and user services

DEVINDEX-Africa

3. Work continued in the updating of the PADIS-DEV data base, with 1500 new records added during the period under review. Staff members of PADIS undertook missions connected with indexing of documents and publication of indexes for centres in Togo and Botswana. Volume 14 of the DEVINDEX-Africa, DEVINDEX-Togo and DEVINDEX-Botswana were printed. Input sheets received from Morocco are being reviewed and processed for the preparation of the next DEVINDEX. During the year more than 1500 records were added to the data base, bringing the total number to over 6500 references.

PADIS-STAT

4. The Pan African Statistical Data Bank (PADIS-STAT) which covers the period 1970-1985 now contains more than 160,000 statistical series.

PADIS-TCDC

5. Work is underway to update the PADIS data base of African experts. New methods of data collection have been devised. Publication of the second edition of the Directory of African Experts is expected by the end of 1987.

PADIS-COMP (External Bibliographic Data Bases)

During the period PADIS acquired the following data bases:

a) AGRIS - FAO data base containing references on all aspects of agriculture including rural sociology, animal industry and food;

b) DEVSIS-CANADA - IDRC data base containing over 8000 bibliographic references on socio-economic development;

c) ISU - data base of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (DIESA) containing unpublished United Nations reports on economic and social development;

d) LABORDOC - a supplementary data base from ILO containing 2584 references on socio-economic development;

POP-IN AFRICA

6. The co-ordinating unit of POP-IN AFRICA at ECA has created a data base using PADIS computer facilities. Over 750 records have now been entered, and a bibliographic index called POPINDEX-AFRICA containing abstracts and indexes will be published shortly.

Selective Dissemination of Information (PADIS/SDI)

7. This service was launched in 1986 to channel new items of information to planners, decision makers and researchers in the field of social and economic development using the data bases installed in the PADIS/CCO. The PADIS/SDI service presently has 38 subscribers.

PADIS Newsletter

8. PADIS launched a quarterly newsletter to facilitate the exchange of experiences between member States and individual organizations and agencies working in the field of information systems. Four issues were published in 1986, and two to date in 1987.

b. Advisory Services

9. Advisory services were rendered to Morocco where the PADIS-STAT data base was installed. Staff members of the National Documentation Centre and the Central Statistics Office were trained in the use and development of the statistical data base.

10. A mission to Tunisia was undertaken by PADIS in collaboration with the ECA Statistics Division at the request of the Arab League Documentation Centre (ALDOC) where the North African Documentation and Information Center (NADIS) is to be housed. The PADIS-STAT data base and a mechanism for exchange of statistical data relating to North Africa between ALDOC and PADIS were installed. Computer staff from ALDOC were trained in the use and development of the statistical data base.

c. Network Building

11. During the period two member States designated institutions for participation in the PADIS network as national centres. They were: Malawi, University of Malawi; and Central African Republic, Documentation Centre and Archives of the Ministry of Planning, Statistics and International Co-operation. This brings to nine the number of member States which have designated national participating centres.

12. The Sub-Regional Technical Committee for the Eastern and Southern African Information System (ESADIS), meeting in Nairobi from 28-30 April 1986, discussed the modalities of making the ESADIS centre operational as soon as possible. The agreement between the Government of Zambia and the Economic Commission for Africa to establish ESADIS was signed on 9 January 1987.

13. A mission was undertaken to Niamey, Niger to continue efforts to have WADIS established in Niger. Progress made towards the establishment of WADIS was reported to the tenth meeting of the legislative organs of the West Africa Subregion, meeting in Ouagadougou in February 1987. WADIS is expected to be launched later in 1987.

14. Missions to assist in the establishment and strengthening of national documentation centres were undertaken to Burkina Faso (November 1986), Djibouti (January 1987), Somalia (November 1986) and Sudan (February 1987).

15. PADIS participated in a seminar on the establishment and management of national information services held in Gaborone, Botswana from 19-27 February 1987. The seminar was organized by the German Foundation for International Development.

16. PADIS participated in the Third ECA/Association of African Universities Conference of Vice-Chancellors, Presidents and Rectors of Institutions of Higher Learning in Africa held in Harare, 19-21 January 1987, suggesting ways to establish a technical process for collecting and disseminating theses of African universities in the region. PADIS also set forth a plan for co-operation with African universities in library and information science and education. In implementing the PADIS project in Africa, the meeting recommended that efforts should be made to include PADIS methodologies in the curricula of library schools and departments in Africa and that available development information in African universities, especially theses and dissertations in the subject areas that fall within the scope of PADIS-DEV, should be made available to member States through PADIS.

17. PADIS also participated in the Seventh Conference of Chief Executives of ECA-sponsored Regional and Subregional Institutions held in Tripoli, Libya, 24-27 January 1987. At this meeting the Standing Committee on the Harmonization and Standardization of Documentation and Information Systems of ECA-sponsored Regional and Subregional Institutions (SCOHSDIS) was established. The Committee, which will be convened annually, is to monitor progress made in the harmonization and standardization of documentation and information systems of all

ECA-sponsored regional and subregional institutions, including ECOWAS. Formal agreements will be worked out for the intitutions to participate in the PADIS regional network. PADIS will serve as the Convenor of the Committee which will report to the Annual Conference of Chief Executives.

18. PADIS participated in the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD) workshop organized for national focal points of the African Network of Administrative Information (ANAI) held in Tangiers and Rabat, Morocco 7-20 May 1986. The aim of the workshop was to introduce national officials to the techniques of completing computer-based workshops and use of the ANAI thesaurus.

d. Training

19. Group training was conducted for staff of documentation centres from member States at PADIS as well as in Nairobi and Lusaka for Eastern and Southern African countries and in Yaounde for Central African countries. This training introduced participants to PADIS/DEVSIS methodologies and information handling. Seventeen participants from 11 countries attended a subregional course introducing PADIS-DEV methodologies held in Nairobi from 22 April - 2 May 1986. For staff of the Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission, a two-week training course was held at PADIS from 26 May to 6 June 1986. Ten participants from six countries of the Central Africa and Great Lakes subregion were trained in a subregional workshop held in Yaounde, Cameroon from 4-8 August 1986. PADIS joined POP-IN in training staff from five national, subregional and regional institutions in a workshop on methodologies of the population information network held in Addis Ababa from 20-31 October 1986. A subregional training workshop for countries within the Eastern and Southern Africa Subregion was held in Lusaka, Zambia from 16-20 March 1987. The workshop focussed on processing of development information with specific reference to anstracting, indexing and building of authority files. A major objective of the workshop was to work towards the development of an integrated subregional system and network of national documentation centres.

20. PADIS in collaboration with the ECA Statistics Division organized a workshop on statistical data base development for French-speaking member States in Addis Ababa, 24-28 November 1986 to enable the participants to design, implement and set up statistical data bases in their respective countries. Topics discussed included the need for computerization of statistical information systems; the role of data bases in an integrated statistical information system; data models and structures; and statistical data base management using microcomputers.

21. Under a project funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Mrs. Jeanne Codjia, Chief, Users' Services at the National Automated Documentation and Information Centre, Cotonou, Benin undertook a two-week training course at PADIS/CCO from 9 to 20 February 1987. The curriculum included training in PADIS methodologies for document analysis; document classification; indexing and abstracting techniques; and introduction to computerized management of bibliographic information using MINISIS software.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE REGIONAL TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OF PADIS

22. The Second Meeting of the Regional Technical Committee adopted ten recommendations. A report on their implementation follows.

Recommendation 1

23. The first recommendation called for the strengthening of national information structure by (a) member States urgently initiating action towards the designation or creation of institutions responsible for information and documentation activities; and by (b) PADIS CCO strengthening its capacity to deliver advisory services for the identification or establishment of national participating centres.

24. With regard to (a), Central African Republic and Malawi in 1986 designated institutions responsible for information and documentation activities to be part of the PADIS network. To assist member States in designating, creating or strengthening institutions, PADIS undertook four missions, to Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan, since the last meeting of the RTC. In addition, the ECA Executive Secretary is in the process of sending a letter to member States urging them to designate their national focal point for information and documentation activities. To strengthen its capacity to deliver such advisory services (b), PADIS prepared a project document for submission to UNDP in the amount of more than US$5,000,000 in which the provision of advisory services for the establishment and strengthening of national documentation and information centres features prominently. Under an advance authorization, the implementation of this project began in January 1987.

Recommendation 2

25. In order to introduce modern information handling techniques and to harmonize and standardize technical procedures and methods used by African information systems, the Committee requested the PADIS CCO to (a) prepare a comprehensive manpower development programme, (b) intensify and diversify its training programme, and (c) contribute to the formulation and promotion of standardization and harmonization of methodologies in the procesing of information.

26. Regarding (a), PADIS proposed at various fora, including the Conference of Vice-Chancellors of Institutions of Higher Learning in Africa the IDRC-sponsored Workshop on Information Needs in Africa (Dakar and Nairobi, March 1987), the establishment of appropriate train[illegible] programmes for information and documentation personnel at African institutions and proposals for the in-service training of present personnel. It has intensified and diversified its own training programmes with the assistance of funds received from IDRC and UNDP. Virtually all PADIS staff, including both professional staff and documentalists, will serv as "regional advisors" to deliver training upon request to member States in the noted fields. The number of such requests has been increasing rapidly. PADIS has worked intensively towards the promotion of standardization and harmonization during this period, particularly with the establishment of the SCOSHOIS noted above. It is working with UNESCO to

introduce mini-micro CDS/IDIS which will permit the introduction of information standards and methodologies on microcomputers throughout the region.

Recommendation 3

27. The Committee recommended that PADIS CCO accelerate the development and testing of methdologies for constructing statistical data bases, ensure their replication at institutions in the region and undertake activities to make its replication possible on other brands of computer hardward and operating systems.

28. With regard to the statistical data base, the number of entries has increased to over 125,000. Programmes have been developed for calculation of distributions and growth rates. On development and testing of methods, work is being done on price statistics. The data base has been revised to incorporate data, when available, through 1990. PADIS-STAT was used to prepare the tables in the statistical annex for the Survey of Economic and Social Conditions in Africa, 1985-1986, (E/ECA/CM.13/3). As noted, the statistical data base was installed in the National Documentation Centre in Morocco and at the Arab League Documentation Centre in Tunisia where staff were trained in its utilization and the exchange of statistical data between ECA and the countries of North Africa was discussed. Further work on development and testing of methods and possibilities of replication on other systems has been hampered by lack of staff available for the tasks.

Recommendation 4

29. The Committee recommended that ECA pursue vigorously the signing of agreements to permit the establishment of subregional centres for East and Southern Africa, North Africa and West Africa.

30. As reported, the agreement for the establishment of ESADIS was signed in January 1987. Negotiations are at an advanced stage for the signing of the WADIS agreement, which is expected to be signed with Niger in 1987. Provision has been made for the housing of NADIS with ALDOC, under a proposal for ARISNET submitted by UNESCO and ECA to the UNDP Bureau of Arab States. Once the proposal is funded, an agreement between ALDOC and ECA will be concluded.

Recommendation 5

31. This recommendation which called for the elaboration of a workplan and strategy for PADIS has been reported on in document ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/5.

Recommendation 6

32. This recommendation which called for various actions to increase financial support for PADIS has been reported on in document ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/4.

Recommendation 7

33. This recommendation which called for the identification of possible income generating activities and modalities for the implementation has also been reported on in ECA/PADIS/RTC/III/4, para. 12. In addition, it has been incorporated into the project document (RAF/87/053) submitted to UNDP for PADIS Phase III, which states that "with an expanded information resource base and available computer resources, the project's user service and participating centres will be in a position to generate a variety of information products and services (indexes, current awareness services, selective dissemination of information, on-line searches, question/answer services, national bibliographies, subject bibliographies, statistical profiles and abstracts, directories, etc.) At the same time, the project's user service will produce newsletters, brochures, posters, etc. to promote the utilization of information and to activate potential user demand. Information products and services will be marketed commercially."

Recommendations 8,9

34. These two recommendations dealt with securing funds for the activities of PADIS in North Africa and the establishment of NADIS.

35. Under the mandate given him by ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 581 (XXI), the President of the North Africa Regional Technical Committee wrote to the Administrator of UNDP (copied to ECA) expressing the desire of member States to see successfully concluded the ECA request for financing of a project to permit the participation on North African states in the PADIS system and network. The Director of the ECA Technical Assistance Co-ordination and Operations Office (TACOO) also wrote the UNDP Bureau for Arab Statues (in May 1986) communicating the decision in the cited resolution of the ECA Conference of Ministers as well as the recommendations of the RTC. The Deputy Director of the UNDP Bureau for Arab States responded that it was not the intention of the Bureau to fund two "similar" projects in their region and that priority would be given to the ALDOC ARISNET project, executed by UNESCO, because it concerned a larger number of countries. The ECA Executive Secretary wrote the Director of the Bureau expressing his reserve regarding this decision which would deprive eight states of the subregion (constituting 80 percent of the total Arab population) of participation in the PADIS system and network. He added further that there was no risk of duplication of activities between the two projects in view of the close collaboration between PADIS and ALDOC. It was finally decided to include the activities which PADIS proposed to undertake in the subregion in the ARISNET project to be submitted to UNDP Bureau of Arab States for financing under the fourth programming cycle (1987-1991). Once funded, they would then be subcontracted by the executing agency to ECA/PADIS.

Recommendation 10

36. This recommendation dealt with the need to build adequate infrastructure at PADIS CCO to deliver services to member States in information technologies through the strengthening of its technical staff and provision for their in-service training.

37. Under the project document submitted to UNDP, PADIS/CCO will have seven technical staff members at the professional level, plus documentalists and technicians. The same project document also makes provision for fellowships for PADIS staff to ensure their training in new technologies and methdologies. In February 1987 one staff member undertook a training course in mini-micro CDS/ISIS in Budapest;four staff members received training in this programme at the International Livestock Centre for Africa in Addis Ababa in March. The IDRC-funded project document also provides for technical staff and their continuing training.

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REPORT ON THE FINANCING OF PADIS

1. Since the last meeting of the Regional Technical Committee, PADIS has made intensive efforts to secure financing for the continuation of the project. A major effort has been the preparation and submission of a project to the United Nations Development Programme/Regional Bureau for Africa (UNDP/RBA) for the PADIS Phase III project in countries of sub-Saharan Africa, in the amount of $5,271,000.

UNDP - Regional Bureau for Africa

2. The immediate objectives of the project, which will cover five years, 1987-1991, corresponding to the UNDP fourth programming cycle are to promote:

- The formulation of information policies by Governments and their translation into on-going activities

- Availability of an information resource base

- Increased access to available information;

- Improved levels of information utilization;

- Generation of income to support certain activities of the project;

- Participation of national focal points and African regional and subregional institutions in the PADIS network;

- Production of information processing norms, standards and tools and the use of compatible norms and standards by participating centres;

- Upgrading of skills and know-how of staff of participating centres and the introduction of up-to-date information handling techniques;

- Increased efficiency of the PADIS Central Co-ordinating Office to execute the programme and promote the programme and to co-ordinate the network.

3. The major outputs of the project are to be advisory services, continued development of computerized data bases, information products and services, establishment and strengthening of national, subregional and reegional participating centres, development and promotion of norms, standards and tools, training, and upgrading of CCO computer and document delivery facilities and substantive servicing of regional and subregional meetings.

4. In the budget of US$ 5,271,000, experts and training account for 37.5% and 22.9 % of the total budget, respectively; expendable equipment, 7.8%; non-expendable equipment, 7.6%; miscellaneous, 5.1%; administrative support, 11.4% and travel, 7.7% of the project budget. The project has not yet received final approval. This is expected to come before the end of

the first half of 1987. However, PADIS has received an advance authorization of US$ 373,000 for its Phase III activities for sub-Saharan Africa for the first half of 1987. These funds are to cover activities to be carried out at the Central Co-ordination Office (CCO) and in member States covered by the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa (sub-Saharan Africa).

UNDP - Regional Bureau for Arab States

5. After four-and-a-half years of negotiation with the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States, an agreement has been reached according to which PADIS activities for North Africa during the period 1987-1991 will be incorporated into the proposal for ARISNET and subcontracted to PADIS/ECA under UNESCO/ECA agreement. The project venue will be the Arab League Documentation Centre (ALDOC) in Tunis, where NADIS will be housed. Under it, PADIS will implement its activities in the North Africa subregion, which follow the objectives of the UNDP project for sub-Saharan Africa. More details will be found in the "Report on progress in programme implementation," (E/ECA/RTCIII/3). This project is also currently under review, with approval expected by May 1987. The projected budget for the PADIS segment of the project is US $320,000, which will cover project personnel (consultants and support staff), group training, installation of Arabic script microcomputer systems, printing costs and miscellaneous.

ECA Contribution

6. Despite the United Nations financial crisis, PADIS continues to receive a substantial contribution towards its activities from the ECA regular budget. For 1987 the ECA contribution to project activities is timated at US $379,700. The financial crisis has prevented ECA from absorbing any of the project posts under the regular budget in 1987. The ECA contribution provides execution and monitoring of the project; administrative backstopping; technical and secretarial support staff; some computer equipment and maintenance; computer and office supplies and stationery; office space and utilities. In the context of the Medium-term Plan for 1990-1995 PADIS will work towards regularizing more of the activities.

Inputs from Member States

7. With regard to the implementation of the UNDP-funded projects, African governments are expected to provide inputs (i) in cash and in kind towards the implemenation of the national components of the PADIS programme; (ii) assign national counterpart staff to project personnel and consultants for the duration of advisory missions and training programmes, (iii) nominate trainees to undergo training programmes; and (iv) send representatives to PADIS-sponsored policy, technical and advisory meetings.

8. It is significant that the first cash contribution to PADIS from a member State was received in 1986, through the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development (UNTFAD). The Government of Zaire contributed US $30,000 to PADIS for training and advisory services to be delivered to the countries of the Great Lakes Subregion in 1987. It is hoped that other states will make similar contributions. In this regard, a project is being prepared for presentation to the 1987 UNTFAD Pledging Confernece to secure additional member States' contributions.

International Development Research Centre

9. The International Development Research Centre (IDRC, Canada) has approved a project for US$201,368 for 1987-1988 assistance to PADIS. The project will fund the post of training co-ordinator for one year and provide funds for training and training-related publications.

Other donors

10. PADIS has submitted a project proposal to the African Development Bank in the amount of US$1.4 million, which is presently under review. The project would support establishment and strengthening of subregional centres.

11. PADIS is also preparing projects for submission to other multilateral and bi-lateral donors, including the European Economic Community and the Governments of Federal Republic of Germany, France and Japan. The projects will request assistance in the strengthening of the subregional centres as well as programme and institutional support. They will also be designed to respond to specific requests from member States which are not covered from other sources. No commitments have yet been received from these donors; however, PADIS will continue to undertake extensive efforts to identify new and diversified sources of funding for the project.

Income generated by the project

12. As recommended by the Evaluation Mission, during this project PADIS intends to investigate the legal and functional feasibility of implementing revenue generating products and services, including marketing of training programmes and information services. The investigation will begin in 1987, centering on the possibility of introducting a fee structure for on-line data base access via public data networks, marketing of technical publications and data bases (offline service) to users outside the region and to profit-making institutions within the region, and development and marketing of new information products. No estimate can yet be made of the amount of revenue the strategy will generate for the project. However, it will be a major emphasis during the period of the project to be pursued as a means to solidify the future of PADIS.

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PADIS STRATEGIES FOR 1987-1991 AND WORKPLAN FOR 1987-1988

1. At its twenty-first session in April 1986, the ECA Conference of Ministers passed resolution 581 relating to the Pan-African Documentation and Information System, which in operative para. 8 requested the Regional Technical Committee to submit to the Commission at its twenty-second session the [PADIS] strategy and work plan for the period 1987-1991.

2. In preparing the strategy and work plan the Regional Technical Committee in its Second Meeting (1986) had requested its members (Recommendation 5, E/ECA/CM.12/33) to submit comments on the draft strategy to PADIS by end September 1986. Accordingly comments were received from Algeria, Morocco and UNESCO.

3. In its capacity as Chairman of the North Africa Regional Technical Committee, Morocco commented that the strategies presented resembled more a work programme, whose objectives he supported, than an actual strategy. A detailed, timely activity plan needed to be worked out for the programme. He felt that the plans for the bibliographic data base of African development literature (PADIS-DEV) were very ambitious. He suggested concentration on a survey and publication of a directory of development periodicals. Regarding this data base, Algeria proferred that a directory of studies undertaken by international organizations on behalf of African countries could be usefully produced. Regarding the data base on experts, both Morocco and Algeria were cautious because because the experts were difficult to identify and the data of short-term reliability. Morocco recommended concentration instead on a data base of specialized documentation centres for the development institutions data base, which would permit direct information exchange between documentation and research centres for development in Africa.

4. Regarding norms, standards and methodologies, Morocco felt that it was important for member States to take up work in this area, adopting PADIS methodologies. Teaching materials relating to the treatment of periodicals would be useful, he felt.

5. The representative of Algeria in commenting on the subject of information infrastructure building: policy and training, he felt that the UNESCO General Programme of Information should take the lead in this area, aided by PADIS in a diffusionary role utilizing the UNESCO experience in the Africa region.

6. Regarding teaching materials, he distinguished between two necessary varieties: those that supported continued training of staff in modern information processing techniques and those that assisted national information and documentation centres in developing reference manuals.

7. On the question of the data transmission network, both Algeria and Morocco felt that this was the work of the Pan African Telecommunication Union (PATU) rather than that of PADIS. Until an African data transmission network was developed, Morocco suggested that PADIS should use European commercial data transmission networks. Algeria suggested that the funds earmarked for this study could be used instead for a study to help national centres develop manuals for on-line access to data bases by existing telecommunications networks.

8. Regarding the feasibility study of a data transmission network, it was not the intention of PADIS to attempt to build or operate such a network; that clearly was in the mandate of PATU. What PADIS intended, rather, was a study to find out what were the capabilities of present data transmission networks and whether they could be used for transmission of PADIS data. Thus its intent was similar to the suggestion of Algeria.

9. The representative of UNESCO re-iterated his remarks presented at the meeting 1986 regarding the broadness and lack of focus of the programme. Part B of the strategies relating to information infrastructure building: standardization, policies, training and improvement of access to information, would, he felt, create a problem of overlap and duplication with the UNESCO PGI programme. Thus, UNESCO suggested that the PADIS programme focus on building the regional system, and that the infrastructure building aspect of the programme be carefully reconsidered. A mechanism should be set up to co-ordinate the overall implementation of the programme with UNESCO.

Strategies for the period

10. Incorporating these comments wherever possible, PADIS has developed a revised strategy for 1987-1991 and elaborated a monthly/quarterly work plan for the first two years of this period. The proposed strategies are as follows:

a) Strengthening of the Central Co-ordination Office equipped with the requisite material and human resources to execute the PADIS regional programme and to deliver advisory assistance to member States for the identification, establishment or strengthening of national information and documentation centres; to provide technical assistance to these national centres to enable them to design national information policies, plans and systems; to transfer know-how and skills and organize training programmes relevant for the operations of national and sectoral information centres; to develop common standards and norms for the processing of various types of information and to replicate same at the national level; to design and construct central computerized bibliographic, referral, statistical and other factual data bases and banks in priority areas of development using inputs from national, subregional and regional levels and to provide a variety of information services therefrom; and to design, implement and co-ordinate an appropriate data transmission mechanism between national, subregional and regional nodes.

b) Establishment and strengthening of National Information and Documentation Centres within each African country, as appropriate, that will be responsible for the co-ordination of information collection, classification, storage and dissemination within their territories and which provide, progressively and as they develop, advisory assistance, training, and information services to subnational (sectoral, ministerial) information centres and which will be the national nodes of the

PADIS network responsible for inputs into the regional system and for deriving outputs on behalf of national users.

c) Establishment and strengthening of PADIS subregional information and documentation centres to be responsible for the provision of certain categories of training and technical assistance to national information and documentation centres and to serve as subregional store- and clearing-houses for information emanating from the respective subregion. As they develop, the personnel and equipment residing at these centres will provide technical back-stopping and advisory services to emerging national centres until they develop their own capabilities. These centres will be the subregional nodes of the PADIS network.

d) Establishment of co-operative arrangements with a number of African organizations as institutional participating centres, which will be responsible, within their respective areas of competence, for the co-ordination of information collection, classification and dissemination exercises; for the development of tools and methodologies applicable to their subjects of interest; for the analysis and repackaging of information; and for the delivery of specialized training courses. Such organizations will constitute the institutional (subject-oriented) nodes in the regional network.

(e) Promoting increased participation of member States by implementing concrete and tangible activities at the national level to demonstrate the ability of PADIS to deliver services to member States and thus acquire the support of field level practitioners which will in turn induce policy makers to commit additional resources to national information activities and to increase their Governments' participation in PADIS. The production of technical publications, as well as dissemination of newsletters, brochures and posters by the project will support this strategy.

(f) Diversifying the financial resources of the project by seeking additional bi-lateral and multi-lateral sources of funding and by investigating the possibility of marketing the projects products and services. The investigation will begin in 1987, centering on the possibility of introducting a fee structure for on-line data base access via public data networks, marketing of technical publications and data bases (off-line service) to users outside the region and to profit-making institutions within the region, and development and marketing of new information products. No estimate can yet be made of the amount of revenue the strategy will generate for the project. However, it will be a major strategy during the period of the project to be pursued as a means to solidify the future of PADIS.

(g) Involvement in the monitoring of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and

Development, 1986-1990 (UNPAAERD). Improved information flows are of crucial importance for the implementation of UNPAAERD. PADIS assisted in information collection and processing for the preparation of UNPAAERD and will continue to focus its statistical and bibliographic data bases on the primary areas identified in the programme. The PADIS Project Director is a member of the ECA Task Force on the Follow-up of the Implementation of UNPAAERD. Thus PADIS will be closely involved in the collection and processing of information relevant for monitoring progress in the achievement of the objectives of UNPAAERD.

11. Within this overall strategy, emphasis is planned on: (a) promotion of resources sharing at all levels, particularly in equipment and high-level personnel which may be either unavailable, too expensive or uneconomical for emerging centres to acquire; (b) harmonization and streamlining of activities to avoid duplication and fragmentation of efforts, particularly in the development and replication of methods and standards; and (c) decentralization of functions and responsibilities from the CCO to the subregional and national levels as their capacities develop.

12. In pursuit of the above strategy, PADIS will undertake all possible efforts to harmonize its activities with those of UNESCO's General Information Programme, through the Regional Committee for PADIS where UNESCO is a de jure member and through regular consultations between the PADIS CCO and the PGI. Several consultations have already taken place since the last meeting of the RTC and others are envisaged during 1987. In addition, a PADIS/UNESCO seminar on strategies is being planned. The project for assistance to North Africa is being worked out jointly with UNESCO for submission to the UNDP Bureau for Arab States. Further field-level co-ordination will be pursued through the delivery of joint training programmes, exchange of experience and information, sharing of expertise and through the transfer of information applications developed by one to the other. PADIS will pursue its efforts to co-ordinate activities in the field of information systems and networks with other regional and international organizations working in the region. In this respect, regular consultations will be held with the Sahel Institute, the POPIN-Africa network, the Arab League Documentation Centre (ALDOC) and other institutions to facilitate the exchange of views and co-ordinate actions.

13. Regarding arrangements with African organizations as institutional participating centres, a significant step forward on this matter was taken at the Seventh Conference of Chief Executives of ECA-sponsored Regional and Subregional Institutions held in Tripoli 24-27 January 1987 where the Standing Committee on the Harmonization and Standardization of Documentation and Information Systems of ECA-Sponsored Regional and Subregional Institutions (SCOHSDIS) was established. The Committee, which will be convened anually, will monitor progress made in the harmonization and standardization of documentation and information systems of all ECA-sponsored regional and regional institutions, including ECOWAS. Formal agreements will also be worked

out for the institutions to participate in the PADIS regional network. PADIS will serve as the Convenor of the Committee which will report to the Annual Conference of Chief Executives.

14. A work plan has been formulated for 1987-1988 in the utilizing this strategy to accomplish the objectives of the PADIS project. The work plan follows in tabular form.

WORK PLAN 1987-88

Pan African Documentation and Information System (PADIS), Phase III

Objectives/outputs	1987												1988			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
I. OBJECTIVE: FORMULATION OF POLICIES & PLANS SELECTION OF INSTITUTIONS, SYSTEMS DESIGN																
Outputs:																
1. Reports of advisory missions																
1.1 Advisory missions for assessment of situation, average 5 /year	-				-		-	-		-			-	-	-	-
1.2 For formulation of policies and plans 2/year						-						-	-		-	
1.3 Selection of lead institutions, 4/year						-						-	-	-	-	-
1.4 Design of nat'l, sectoral systems, 3/year										-	-	-	-		-	
1.5 Choice of technologies, 2/year										-	-	-	-			
2.1 Guidelines for formulation of policies & plans																
3.1 Guidelines for operation of computerized info. doc. systems																
II. OBJECTIVE: AVAILABILITY INFO. RESOURCE BASE																
Outputs:																
1. Bibliographic data bases																
1.1 PADIS-DEV (collection, classification, indexing, abstracting of documents at ECA)																
1.2 Review of inputs from participating centres and merging for PADIS-DEV																
1.3 PADIS-COM, receipt of records in machine readable form from UNIDO, FAO, ILO, IDRC, etc.																
1.4 Acquisition of commercial, quasi-commercial data bases																
2. PADIS-STAT																
2.1 Data conversion, increase in # of time series																
3. Experts' Data Base																
3.1 PADIS-CONE, collection, classification, processing of questionnaires from experts																
4. Institutions data base																
4.1 Data base on African institutions, development of data collection and processing methodologies, testing																
4.2 Data base on institutions, data collection, processing, storage																
5. Projects' data base																
PADIS-PROM, data base on projects, development of data collection, processing methodologies, testing																
III. OBJECTIVE: INFORMATION PRODUCTS, SERVICES																

Objectives/outputs

Outputs	1987 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1988 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. User needs survey																
Including survey method, instruments, field missions, analysis, reporting, dissemination																
2. User manuals																
2.1 For bibliographic data base																
2.2 For statistical data base																
2.3 Continuous update of manuals																
3. Brochures, pamphlets posters																
3.1 Brochures																
3.2 Pamphlets, posters																
4. PADIS Newsletter, quarterly																
5. Income generation																
5.1 Identify, expand sales outlets																
5.2 Sale of publications																
5.3 Sale of data bases																
6. On-line services																
6.1 Bibliographic data bases																
6.2 Statistical data bases																
6.3 Referral data bases (see II.4, II.5)																
7. Installation (circulation) of copies of data bases																
7.1 Circulation of bibliographic data bases, on request																
7.2 Installation of PADIS-STAT, on request																
7.3 Installation of referral data bases, on request																
8. DEVINDEX-AFRICA																
8.1 Quarterly issue			-		-		-		-		-		-	-	-	-
8.2 Cumulative issue						-							-			
9. Directory of Experts, Vol.2																
10. SDI																
11. Question/Answer Services																
12. Delivery of primary documents on paper & microform media																
OBJECTIVE: NATIONAL' SUBREGIONAL REGIONAL PARTICIPATING CENTRES																
Outputs																
1. Enlistment of national participeting centres																
1.1 Negotiations with member States on the designation of their participating centres																

WORK PLAN 1987-88

Pan African Documentation and Information System (PADIS), Phase III

Objectives/outputs	1987												1988			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.2 Conclusion of memoranda of understanding stipulating rights and obligations of each party, preparation of workplan																
2. Establishment and operation of CADIS																
2.1 Meeting of plenipotentiaires from central African member States		-														
2.2 Negotiations and conclusion of host agreement and host government's inputs																
2.3 Site preparation																
2.4 Purchase & installation of equipment																
2.5 Training of staff																
2.6 Receipt of inputs, distribution of outputs																
3. Establishment and operation of ESADIS																
3.1 Negotiation and signing of host agreement																
3.2 Installation of equipment																
3.3 Training of staff																
3.4 Receipt of input, distribution of output																
4. Establishment operation of NADIS																
4.1 Negotiation and signing of host agreement																
4.2 Training of staff																
4.3 Receipt of input, distribution of output																
5. Establishment and operation of NADIS																
5.1 Negotiation and signing of host agreement																
5.2 Site preparation and installation of equipment																
5.3 Training of staff																
5.4 Receipt of input, distribution of outputs																
V. QUALITIVE: NORMS, STANDARDS TOOLS																
Outputs:																
1.1 Preparation of manual for bibliographic description																
1.2 Up-date, maintenance of manual, thesaurus, codes and other tools																
1.3 Receipt of feed back, dissemination of updates to participating centres																

Objectives/outputs	1987												1988			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2. For Referral Information																
2.1 Revision of data collection worksheet for experts																
2.2 Design of data collection worksheet for directory of institutions																
2.3 Design of data processing methods and testing for directory of institutions																
2.4 Design of data collection worksheet for directory of projects																
2.5 Design of data processing methods and testing for directory of projects																
2.6 Preparation and update of manual for preparation of referral information inputs (progressively on experts, institutions and projects)																
2.7 Negociations with African regional organisations to elicit their co-operation																
3. For PADIS-STAT																
3.1 Continued preparation of application programmes and management utilities to finalize work on PADIS-STAT																
VI OBJECTIVE: TRAINING																
Outputs:																
1. National level Training in documentation techniques, upon request from participating centres or according to assistance packages designed through advisory services, 4 times per year																
2. Regional workshops in computerized documentation techniques, one each in 1987/88, two per year 1989/91.					-											
3. Regional workshop in policy and managerial aspects of information systems development, one each in 1987/88 two per year 1989/91											-					-
4. Regional workshop in statistical data base development and utilization, one each in 1987/88 two per year in 1988/91										-					-	
5. Fellowships/study tours and familiarization missions for staff of national centres and PADIS staff, two per year						-				-				-		-
6. Preparation of training materials for national level training courses																
7. Preparation of training materials for regional workshops in computerized documentation techniques																
8. Preparation of training materials for regional workshops on policy and managerial aspects of information systems development																

WORK PLAN 1987-88

Pan African Documentation and Information System (PADIS), Phase III

Objectives/outputs	1987												1988			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
9. Preparation of training materials for workshops on statistical data base development																
VII. OBJECTIVE: CENTRAL CO-ORDINATION																
Outputs																
1. Acquisition of selected brands of selected brands of microcomputer hardware/ software																
1.1 Purchase and installation of IBM, HP and other microcomputers																
1.2 Acquisition of mini-micro-CDS/ISIS IV-V, Dbase and other software, as produced																
1.3 Develop competence in above by training PADIS staff																
2. Upgrading of computer resources																
2.1 Interconnection of the available HP3000/33 and HP 3000/48																
2.2 Upgrading of the HP 3000/48 to an HP 3000/58																
3. Upgrading of document delivery capacity																
3.1 Micro-form laboratory																
3.2 Replacement of obsolete photocopying equipment																
4. Substantive Servicing of the Meeting of the Regional Technical Committee for PADIS, annually																
5. Substantive servicing of the meetings of the subregional Technical Committees for PADIS																
6. Substantive servicing of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians Demographers and Information Scientists, biannually																
7. Substantive servicing of the meeting between PADIS and African regional institutions, annually																

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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Third Meeting of the
Regional Technical Committee
for PADIS

15-16 April 1987
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

PADIS MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1990-1995

Cover note for submission of the draft plan to specialized intergovernmental bodies

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with the relevant parts of the regulations and rules governing programme planning, the programme aspects of the budget, the monitoring of implementation and the methods of evaluation (ST/SGB/204) the draft section of the medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995 is attached for review and comment by the Regional Technical Committee for PADIS. In particular, the review should be focus on:

(a) the determination of relative priorities among activities subsumed under a given programme;

(b) initiatives proposed by the Secretariat;

(c) the identification of activities which are proposed for termination or curtailment;

Recommendations for changes adopted by the RTC will be taken into account in revising this draft to produce the plan to be submitted to CPC, ECOSOC, and the General Assembly. As is the case with the programme budget, the approval of the medium-term plan is a prerogative of the General Assembly.

Subprogramme 7: ELECTRONIC WORD AND DATA PROCESSING SERVICES FOR ECA SECRETARIAT

(a) Legislative authority

The legislative authority for this programme is Commission resolutions 359(XIV), 438(XVII), 469(XVII), 498(XIX), 534(XX), and 581(XXI).

(b) Objectives

To provide electronic word and data processing services for all needed computer applications in the ECA secretariat, to maintain computer facilities, and to train inhouse users in the utilization of available facilities.

(c) Problems addressed

While other United Nations secretariats have automated their data and word processing needs for substantive activities, financial, personnel, other administrative and management services and have thereby increased tremendously their productivity, lack of resources has prevented ECA from modernizing its computer facilities, resulting in low productivity. system.

(d) Strategy

(i) The situation at the end of 1989

Given the rate at which activities are increasing, by the end of 1989, the number of computer applications in use at the secretariat will put a strain on the existing computer facilities - two HP CPU units, consisting of an HP 58 (upgraded from the existing HP 44 in 1987) and an HP Micro 3000 XE (which will replace the HP 3000/III in 1988), the bulk of which were purchased from project funds. It is expected that at the end of 1989, these two systems will be interconnected, with 70 terminals or micros linked to them and possibility of connection of another 100. The New York/Addis Ababa alternate voice data (AVD) line will be in operation, with access possible from any terminal at ECA. Computer services will be provided to users in substantive divisions as well as the administration.

(ii) The period 1990-1995

In the period 1990-1995, the following will be undertaken:

Provision of microcomputers to stand alone, to operate in local area networks (LAN) and/or be linked to the mainframe central processing unit, to staff (both professional and general services) in substantive divisions as well as in the administrative and other management services; continued provision of access to ECA of other United Nations system data bases; increased exchange of data and information with the rest of the United Nations system through the data communication network, training of in-house users in microcomputer utilization and

applications; advisory services to ECA substantive divisions and administration on equipment purchase to ensure maximal price performance and compatability with ECA and the rest of the United Nations system, development and maintenance of operating systems, data bases and applications software; provision of technical assistance programming support services to ECA substantive divisions; maintenance of the ECA mailing list; scheduling and monitoring of the maintenance of system hardware; and design and development of utility programmes and new applications to offer improved planning, control and forecasting systems to end users.

SUBPROGRAMME 8: INFORMATION SYSTEMS DEVELOMENT AND USER SERVICES

(a) Legislative authority

The legislative authority for this programme is Commission resolutions 359 (XIV); 438(XVII); 469(XVIII); 498(XIX), 534(XX); and 581(XXI).

(b) Objective

The objective of this subprogramme is to respond to the needs of member States for reliable, accessible information on aspects of economic and social development in Africa by creating a series of numeric and non-numeric data bases for storage and dissemination; to assist member States, subregional and regional institutions in the development and use of information systems and to promote the exchange of information among member States in the context of technical co-operation.

(c) Problems addressed

Member States need immediate access to national and comparative data on economic and social development for planning and decision making. Frequently, the necessary information exists in Government offices or in offices of international organizations, but is not available/accessible to end users (Government planners, decision makers) at the time of need. African information and documentation infrastructure lags sadly behind the region's pressing needs for development information. For decades, the information area has been neglected, and, as a result, the vital role which information plays as an input to and output from every area of human endeavour was neglected. Information, properly organized and managed, is a pre-requisite to Africa's self-reliant development.

Specifically, the major problems hindering the efficient organization of information and the smooth delivery of information services at the national level in Africa are: the absence, in most cases, of national information policy and policy-making organs; the scarcity of human material and financial resources; the lack of awareness on the part of users of the availability and accessibility of data, and the reluctance

on the part of users to seek out information/data for use in planning and decision making; the inadequacy of training facilities; the severe shortage of middle level specialists and technicians; the low status accorded to information personnel; the paucity of training opportunities in modern information handling techniques; the use of outdated methods of information processing, storage and dissemination; and the low priority given to information systems and services in national development plans. Use of incompatible information collection and classification methods, and poor communication mechanisms have hampered intercountry exchange of development information and experience.

(d) Strategy for the period 1990-1995

(i) The situation at the end of 1989

The following data bases will have been created: statistical data base; data base of African experts; of projects; of development institutions. The data bases will have been installed in 10 national and subregional documentation centres and regional institutions. Eight external data bases will have been acquired. Fifteen national documentation and information centres will have enrolled in the network; norms and standards for the harmonization of documentation will have been established at ECA-sponsored subregional and regional institutions. Three subregional documentation and information centres will be operational.

(ii) The period 1990-1995

Activities under this subprogramme are of a continuing nature:

- Advisory services on formulation of national information policy and the establishment and strengthening of national documentation centres and linkages with the PADIS network;

- Development of user services to encourage utilization of the network through development of innovative information products and training of users;

- Training of staff of national, subregional and regional institutions in network utilization;

- Processing of economic and social data in data bases, and acquisition of data bases from commercial and non-commercial sources;

- Training of staff of national and subregional documentation centres and regional institutions in harmonization of standards and methodologies;

- Horizontal co-operation in the continuing exchange of information, including the installation of data bases at participating centres;

- Provision of direct access to PADIS data bases for the majority of African countries through public

telecommunication networks and installation of data bases on magnetic media to 15 other participating national and subregional centres and regional institutions;

- Strengthening subregional centres by improving linkages with national centres for the exchange of data; and

- Publication at regular intervals of selected data base contents and delivery of other hardcopy data-base derived information products such as question/answer services, selective dissemination of information and current awareness profiles. The PADIS Newsletter, DEVINDEX-AFRICA and directory of African experts will continue to be published. New data bases will be developed and existing ones modified according to the results of surveys of changing user needs.

Research on improved methodologies for statistical and non-numerical data base development will be undertaken. Specialized reports as well as guidelines for the utilization of the PADIS system will be published. Establishment of a fourth subregional documentation and information will be undertaken. By the end of 1995, the network of PADIS participating centres will reach all countries of the region. To provide guidance for the network, the subregional and regional technical committees will continue to meet.

247th meeting,
19 April 1986.

581 (XXI). Pan-African Documentation and Information System

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling its resolution 377 (XV) of 12 April 1980 on the Pan-African Documentation and Information System,

Recalling also its resolution 413 (XVI) of 10 April 1981 concerning the financing of the System,

Further recalling its resolution 498 (XIX) of 26 May 1984, by which it decided to establish the Regional Technical Committee for the System,

Noting with satisfaction the progress made by the Pan-African Documentation and Information System project in providing assistance to member States in the development of methodologies for handling numerical and non-numerical information,

Also recalling its resolution 534 (XX) of 29 April 1985 on the financing and work programme of the System and on the importance attached by member States to the project,

Noting with satisfaction the outcome of the Executive Secretary's negotiations with donor agencies to secure the financing required for the third phase of the System's programme,

Noting also with satisfaction the action taken by some member States towards setting up and strengthening their national information and documentation infrastructure,

Further noting with satisfaction the actions being taken by the countries of the North Africa subregion towards the creation of the North African Documentation and Information System,

Noting the outcome of the evaluation undertaken jointly with the United Nations Development Programme, the Economic Commission for Africa and the International Development Research Council and the Government of the Niger,

Having examined the report and recommendations of the Regional Technical Committee for the System at its second meeting, held at Yaounde, Cameroon, on 11 and 12 April 1986,

1. Adopts the report of the second meeting of the Regional Technical Committee for the Pan-African Documentation and Information System, and takes note of the System's work programme for the period 1986-1987 contained therein;

2. Expresses its thanks to the United Nations Development Programme and the International Development Research Centre for their assistance in the evaluation exercise and for their renewed financial commitment to the Pan-African Documentation and Information System project;

3. Expresses its appreciation of the interest shown by the Governments of France and the Federal Republic of Germany and the African Development Bank with regard to the financing of certain elements of the System's programme;

4. Expresses its thanks to the League of Arab States for having accepted that the Arab League Documentation Centre will host the North African Documentation and Information System for a transitional period of three years;

5. Requests the Executive Secretary to enter into negotiations with the League of Arab States for the implementation of the above project;

6. Expresses its appreciation to all international organizations, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, for their past and prospective assistance to the Pan-African Documentation and Information System;

7. Invites the Yaounde- and Gisenyi-based Multinational Programming and Operational Centres to finalize arrangements for the setting up of the Central African Documentation and Information System;

8. Requests the Regional Technical Committee to submit to the Commission at its twenty-second session the strategy and work plan for the period 1987-1991;

9. Calls upon the African countries members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of States to approach the European Economic Community so as to enable the Pan-African Documentation and Information System to have access to funds earmarked for regional projects under the Lome III Convention;

10. Further calls upon the other African countries, particularly those which are members of the Regional Technical Committee for the System, to make the same approach to the Community in order to obtain financing for the North African Documentation and Information System project;

11. Also calls upon the Governments of the Niger and Zambia to continue to facilitate respectively the setting up of the West African Documentation and Information System and the Eastern and Southern African Documentation and Information System, respectively;

12. Requests the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to take necessary measures to ensure the approval of project RAB/82/008 for the establishment of the North African Documentation and Information System and to this effect mandates the chairman of the North African subregional technical committee for the Pan-African Documentation and Information System to make approaches to the United Nations Development Programme for this purpose;

13. Requests the Executive Secretary to continue and intensify the negotiations he has initiated with donor agencies to secure the financing of the third phase of the Pan-African Documentation and Information System;

14. Invites the Executive Secretary to carry out the necessary consultations with all institutions sponsored by the Economic Commission for Africa, as well as with international and regional organizations active in the information and documentation field in Africa, with a view to harmonizing their information and documentation programmes, and to establish co-operative links in this field;

15. Requests the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the progress in the implementation of this resolution to the Commission at its twenty-second session.

247th meeting,
19 April 1986.

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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Seventh Meeting of the North
Africa Committee of Experts

Tangiers, Morocco
24-26 March 1987

REPORT OF THE SUBREGIONAL TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OF THE PAN-AFRICAN DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEM (PADIS)

Tangier, Morocco, 24 March 1987

1. The Subregional Technical Committee for the Pan-African Documentation and Information System (PADIS) held its regular meeting at the Headquarters of the Tangier MULPOC on 24 March 1987. The meeting was presided over by Mr. Ahmed Fassi-Fihri of Morocco who had been elected for a term of three years at the inaugural meeting of the Subregional Technical Committee held at Rabat from 14 to 19 October 1985.

2. Present at the meeting were:

Mr. Ahmed Fassi-Fihri, Morocco

Mr. Tahar Ayouz, Algeria

Mr. Djamal Eddine Benzine, PADIS

3. Also attending the meeting as an observer was Mr. Smail Atmane of the Documentation Centre of the League of Arab States secretariat (ALDOC). His presence was in line with recommendation 9 (c) adopted by the PADIS Regional Technical Committee at its meeting held on 11 and 12 April 1986 in Yaounde, Cameroon.

4. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Welcoming statement by the Chairman of the Committee;
2. Progress report by the Chairman;
3. Report on the financing of the action programme of the North African Documentation and Information System (NADIS);
4. Statement by the representative of ALDOC on the implementation of the NADIS work programme;
5. Conclusions and recommendations;
6. Date and place of the next meeting;
7. Adoption of the report;
8. Closing of the meeting.

Welcoming Statement

5. In his statement, the Chairman of the Committee welcomed participants on his own behalf and that of his Government. He expressed satisfaction with the progress made in the implementation of the NADIS project since the inaugural meeting of the Committee.

Progress report by the Chairman

6. Following the meeting that the Committee had held in Rabat from 14 to 16 October 1985 and at which the proposal had been accepted that ALDOC should host NADIS for a three-year transitional period, a decision subsequently endorsed by resolution six of the North African MULPOC Council of Plenipotentiaries held on 20 and 21 March 1986, a working session had been held at Addis Ababa on 7 April 1986 between the Director of PADIS, the Director of ALDOC and the Chairman of the Committee. An initial work programme had been prepared at that working session.

7. The Chairman of the Committee recalled the consensus which had emerged during the second meeting which the PADIS Regional Technical Committee had held at Yaounde on 11 and 12 April 1986 regarding the proposal that ALDOC should host NADIS for a transitional period of three years following which an assessement would be conducted with the view to making recommendations on the definitive status of NADIS.

8. The report of the second meeting of the Regional Committee had been endorsed by the ECA Conference of Ministers which had met in Yaounde on 14 and 16 April 1986.

9. In accordance with the mandate that the Conference of Ministers had given him in Resolution 581 (XXI) the Chairman had addressed a letter to the Administrator of UNDP on 28 August 1986 with a copy to ECA. In that letter, he had expressed on behalf of the MULPOC member States the wish to have a speedy response to the request that the ECA secretariat had made for the financing of the initial work programme prepared in Yaounde (Joint ECA/PADIS/ALDOC request No. REB/82/008) to enable member States of the subregion to participate in the PADIS network. To date, regrettably, no official response had been received.

Report of the PADIS Director

10. The Director of PADIS described the activities undertaken in the subregion in furtherance of the Joint PADIS/ALDOC work programme prepared at the meeting among the respective Central Co-ordinating Offices on 6 and 7 April 1986. Among the activities:

a) a seminar on the development of statistical data bases had been organized at Addis Ababa in November 1986 with the co-operation of the ECA Statistics Division which had been attended by representatives from Tunisia, the Sudan and ALDOC;

b) PADIS/STAT software and statistical data bases had been installed at the Morocco National Documentation Centre and at ALDOC, and the staff of those two institutions had been trained in the use of the material.

11. Progress had also been made at the PADIS Central Co-ordinating Office with the increase in the number of series in the PADIS/STAT

data base and of the number of references in the bibliographical data base on development (PADIS/DEV).

12. Additional bibliographical data bases such as those of AGRIS, UN-DIESA and DEVSIS of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) had also been acquired.

Report on the Financing of the NADIS work programme

13. Along with the effort made by the Chairman of the Subregional Technical Committee (see para.9) the Director of the Technical Assistance Co-ordination and Operations Office (TACOO) in ECA had asked the UNDP Regional Bureau for the Arab States in a letter dated 23 May 1986 to take note of the decisions made by the ECA Conference of Ministers and the recommendations of the Regional Technical Committee.

14. In response, the Deputy Director of the UNDP Bureau for the Arab States had indicated that the Bureau did not intend to finance two similar projects in the same region and that the ARIS-NET project of the Arab League Documentation Centre being implemented by UNESCO would have the priority given the fact, among other things, that it concerned a greater number of countries.

15. In a letter addressed to the Director of the Bureau, the Executive Secretary had expressed reservations about this decision which would deprive eight States of the subregion that accounted for 80 per cent of the total Arab population of their legitimate right to participate in the PADIS network. The Executive Secretary had also stated that there was no risk of duplication in the two project activities in view of the consultations that had taken place between the two Central Co-ordinating Offices and the fact that the work programme had been formulated jointly.

16. As a result of the foregoing, it had been decided finally to include the activities that PADIS planned to conduct in the subregion in the ARIS-NET project document which ALDOC would submit for the fourth UNDP Programming Cycle so that the activities would be subcontracted to ECA and PADIS.

Statement by the Representative of ALDOC on the implementation of the NADIS work programme

17. The representative of ALDOC described the activities undertaken within the context of the PADIS/ALDOC work programme prepared in April 1986 at Yaounde. They included training programmes for national staff in two member States, participation of national experts in regional training programmes, fellowships, pre-feasibility studies and substantive consultations. Participants took due note of these activities and expressed satisfaction that ALDOC had carried them out even though they had not been asked to contribute financially. They noted, however, that the work programme prepared at Yaounde had yet to be submitted to the policy organs.

Conclusions and Recommendations

18. In view of the practical lessons learned form the experience that PADIS had gone through at the regional and subregional levels; the recent developments that had occurred with the introduction of micro-computers for the management of information and documentation; the need to have greater cost benefits for the current and subsequent phases of the project and of the need for new concepts having a content more suited to the conditions prevailing in the countries of the subregion, the PADIS Subregional Technical Committee:

(a) urges the PADIS Regional Technical Committee to consider updating the study concerning the PADIS project and, in this regard, requests Mr. Ayouz Tahar, in his capacity as an expert, to prepare on behalf of the countries, members of the Subregional Committee, the terms of reference for the study which will be submitted to the forthcoming meeting of the Committee scheduled to be held on 15 and 16 April 1987 in Addis Ababa;

(b) further recommends that national experts in the region should be actively involved in the implementation of the study;

(c) the study should help define and select the most suitable legal framework for the project to accomplish its mission and to achieve the set objectives while at the same time guaranteeing its viability;

(d) participants strongly recommend that all the member States should participate regularly in the work of the Subregional Committee; and,

(e) all member States should officially designate focal points for the NADIS project.

Date and place of the next meeting

19. The Committee recommended that for reasons of efficiency, future meetings of the Technical Committee should be held at least 48 hours before the meetings of the MULPOC policy organs.

20. The Committee further recommended that the working and collaborative relationships between ALDOC, PADIS and the States members of the Committee should be strengthened in order to promote the establishment of the NADIS network.

21. UNDP was requested to respond favourably to the joint ALDOC/PADIS request formulated within the context of the ARIS-NET project.

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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Third Meeting of the
Regional Technical Committee
for PADIS

15-16 April 1987
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING OF PLENIPOTENTIARIES OF STATES MEMBERS OF THE GISENYI AND YAOUNDE-BASED MULPOCS ON THE CREATION OF A CENTRAL AFRICAN DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

A meeting of Plenipotentiaries of States Members of the Gisenyi and Yaounde-based MULPOCs on the Creation of a Central African Documentation and Information System (CADIS) was held in Addis Ababa from 10-11 April 1987. Representatives of seven states Members were present. It was decided unanimously to accept the offer of Zaire to house CADIS. The Government of Zaire graciously accepted to pay the costs of the first phase of the project, i.e. investment and start-up costs, including provision of office space, a computer room with appropriate infrastructure and a meeting/training room, office furniture and equipment and personnel (a director, information scientist/data base manager and chief documentalist at the professional level and a computer operator, secretary and guard as support staff). It was also decided that all the states members of the two Central Africa Regions would be members of the Subregional Technical Committee. Zaire would chair the Committee for two years and, in that capacity, represent the Subregional Committee on the Regional Technical Committee.

STATEMENT

BY

Professor Adebayo Adedeji
United Nations Under-Secretary General
and
Executive Secretary of
the Economic Commission for Africa

at the

Opening of the

Third Meeting of the

Regional Technical Committee

for PADIS

15 April 1987

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Africa Hall for this Third Meeting of the Regional Technical Committee for PADIS.

As you all know, the last year was a test of the quality of documentation and information systems in our member States. Specifically, the preparations for the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa were a most trying experience. The process of collecting data for preparing the basic documents that were submitted to the Special Session revealed the shortcomings of information systems in our member States, in UN Agencies and in international organizations, in coming up with hard facts and data on which the world community could base its assessment of the crisis and the level of assistance expected of it.

The lessons learned from this recent experience are twofold. First, that conventional information services such as libraries and statistical services are not adequate to meet the information needs posed by emerging socio-economic challenges. Second, that there are basic difficulties arising from the inadequacy of existing definitions, nomenclatures and indicators for understanding the development problems being experienced by our member States.

It was with these lessons in mind that the Interagency Task Force on the Follow-up on the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development appointed, at its inaugural meeting, a team of experts on improving information flows on the follow-up processes for African economic recovery. Following consultations with member States and concerned international agencies the team has come up with lucid observations and a host of recommendations on the institutional and technical arrangements that have to be put in place if the monitoring exercise is to be effective and efficient.

The implications for PADIS of these realities and of the corrective actions being pursued by member States and the international community are significant and varied. On the one hand, the shortcomings I mentioned earlier are reflective of how weak information infrastructures are, and this, in turn, is caused by the inadequate attention given to informatics. The implication for PADIS is that it should intensify its assistance to member States to enable them to introduce the basic elements of badly needed information infrastructures. It is for this reason that the design studies for PADIS had initially recommended, and that we still maintain, that PADIS should be involved in matters of information policies, advisory services, training, transfer of methodologies, etc.

The alternative approach would be for PADIS to concentrate on the collection, processing and dissemination of information in a narrowly-defined field. We do realise that this is a strategy advocated by some authorities on the subject. The question of real importance is which of these alternatives holds the greatest potential for redressing the imbalance between existing information needs and the outputs provided by existing services.

The direction we would like to take, as PADIS enters its third phase, leans towards the first alternative, i.e., that PADIS should aim at strengthening the basic information infrastructure at the national level. I would like to reassure you that a lot of soul-searching, reflection and strategic planning has gone into it before we arrived at such a focus. Neither was such a direction decided on unilaterally by the ECA and the management of PADIS. Rather, we took into account the expressed needs of our member States, the recommendations of the evaluation exercise conducted during 1985, the opinions of sister agencies as well as the advice of leading authorities on the subject.

This is a topic we will go into in greater detail when we discuss the strategies for PADIS for the period 1987-91. We shall also see from the progress report submitted for the Committee's deliberations on how well prepared PADIS is to go in this new direction.

Distinguished Colleagues

Let me, at this point, just mention briefly the work PADIS has been doing in the areas of bibliographic data bases, statistical data banks and training. The Central Coordination Office has assembled a number of data bases on food and agriculture, industrial development and employment by acquiring copies of those available at FAO, UNIDO and ILO respectively. These are complemented by the African development literature data base developed at PADIS with partial contributions from its participating centres.

The statistical data bank, now available for on-line use within the Secretariat, provides time-series data covering a period of 25 years, on national accounts, foreign trade, population, education, health, etc. One of the concrete outputs of this data bank is the Annual Statistical Yearbook.

I will leave to your imagination how for this unprecedented accumulation of information and data will facilitate the work of our planners, researchers and development experts.

You will agree with me that in spite of their limitations in meeting information needs, particularly for policy-making decision-making, bibliographic and statistical data bases are very useful; they are also indispensable for building more specialized information systems such as those for debt management and for creating early warning systems.

As you will note from the report on progress in programme implementation submitted to you by the Secretariat significant achievements have been recorded by PADIS in the areas of expanding the variety and size of data bases, user services, advisory services and in the delivery of training programmes. In this connection, I would like to point out that two of our member States, i.e. the Central African Republic and the Republic of Malawi, have now agreed that their centres should participate in the PADIS system. The agreement between the Government of Zambia and the ECA to bring ESADIS to the operational stage has been signed. And a meeting of plenipotentiaries from Central African States has just agreed on the establishment of the Central African Documentation and Information System (CADIS) which the Government of Zaire has accepted to host. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Governments of Zaire and Zambia for the generosity they have shown in hosting these subregional centres.

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The present session of the Committee should enable us to assess the importance our member States and regional organizations have come to attach to PADIS and what are their expectations.

Over time, there has clearly emerged a leadership role to be played by PADIS. It has become an indispensable instrument for the development of information systems in Africa. This has been recognised by the UNDP evaluation mission following its visits to a number of African countries. The Third Conference of Vice-Chancellors, Presidents and Rectors of Institutions of Higher Learning in Africa which met in Harare in February 1987 identified a number of areas where the intervention of PADIS will be essential if Africa is to make full use of the literature its institutions of higher learning are producing. The last annual meeting of Chief Executives of some thirty ECA-sponsored African regional and subregional institutions considered PADIS as having a key role in the harmonization of the information systems of these institutions and those they are executing on behalf of their respective member States. More recently, it was reported to me by colleagues who represented the ECA at a series of meetings of experts convened to design the medium-term information science strategy for the IDRC that PADIS was recognised by these experts as a response to a felt need.

As I said earlier, in the process, the roles attributed to PADIS have been multiplying at an accelerated rate. Given the limitations of the resources available to us and the managerial capacity at our disposal, I must admit that we are beginning to feel overwhelmed by the demands the situation poses. Therefore, it has become imperative that we resist the temptation to bite more than we can chew. Unfortunately, not all of those seeking assistance from PADIS fully understand our position.

Dear Colleagues,

You have in front of you a report on the present funding situation. As you will note, UNDP and IDRC, our major partners in the PADIS exercise, have once again decided to continue funding the project for five and two years respectively. I would like to take this opportunity to extend, on behalf of the Committee, our appreciation for their support. I am also pleased to report to you that one of the issues that was the subject of long discussions at our last meeting, namely, funding support from the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States, has now been resolved to our satisfaction.

As you will note from the strategies and work programmes of the PADIS Project, the level of resources available is insufficient to provide the range of assistance to be rendered through PADIS if any substantial progress is to be achieved in the information field in the medium-term. Some of the negotiations we have undertaken in the last one year have not yet borne any fruit. Therefore, I am inclined to suggest that the Committee looks into the issue seriously and the options available to us. In this context, I would like it to be noted that one of the impediments we have repeatedly faced in the funding negotiation process has been the low level of Government inputs, which most donors have tended to make a precondition for their assistance. This is, again, another area where the Committee could prove itself useful in supposing the resolution to be submitted to TEPCOW calling on member States to pledge generously at the forthcoming Pledging Conference for the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development.

Distinct, but closely related to this issue of funding, is the concern of our member States and donors about the long-term sustainability of the PADIS programme. There are a number of options available to us, some more promising and seemingly more reliable than others. The long-term sustainability of PADIS will have a bearing on its organizational status. This is an issue which we will have to treat as a priority issue over the next few years. As a first step in this direction, you have before you a document that recommends the inclusion of PADIS in the UN medium-term plan for the period 1990-1995. Your endorsement of the proposals in this document, and subsequent approval by the present session of the Conference of Ministers, will provide the legislative mandate for ECA to execute the PADIS programme during that period. This will further enable PADIS to have access to UN regular budget funds and thereby increase ECA's contributions to the funding of the PADIS programme.

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The prospects for PADIS today are much brighter than when we started out seven years ago. We should all feel proud that we are closely involved in the making of an institution that holds a lot of potential for the sustained development of information systems in support of African economic recovery and development.

Once again, I thank you all for coming to Africa Hall to participate in this meeting.

It is with great pleasure that I now declare open the Third Meeting of the Regional Technical Committee for PADIS.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION OF PADIS NATIONAL PARTICIPATING CENTRES BY AFRICAN MEMBER STATES

1. To progressively eliminate the obstacles to development in the information and documentation field, the approach being followed by PADIS at the national level focusses on creating awareness at policy and decision-making levels of Governments with a view to prompting them to identify and designate a body (national centre) responsible for socio-economic information and documentation affairs.

2. It is in turn expected of this national centre, or of similar bodies that already exist, to spearhead changes in policies, plans and legislation and to introduce innovations in concepts, methods, skills and technologies in this field.

3. Steps in Identifying a PADIS National Participating Centre

(a) Carry out a survey of all or the major institutions engaged in documentation, library and information work with a view to determining:

(i) the type of information and documentation activities the institutions are carrying out, whether sectoral or multi-sectoral, with preference to multi-sectoral,

(ii) available human and material resources,

(iii) financial resources in terms of the development plan for the library documentation and information centre,

(iv) full commitment of the institution to strengthen the documentation or library centre, by carrying out required innovations and modernising the information and documentation handling facilities.

(b) Examine the centres being surveyed in terms of historical circumstances and preferences of each government.

(c) Review the objective situation with regard to information and documentation activities, e.g. whether the available manpower can to carry out the required duties of a PADIS national participating centre without additional human and material resources.

(d) Review the results of the survey and determine whether a member State could opt to gradually develop an existing centre or should establish an altogether new agency.

(e) Review the depository laws of each country and determine which centre(s) has been given the powers of enforcing the

depository law, with the long term objective of having a national centre given the mandate to develop and co-ordinate the activities of others.

4. Finally, designate the centre that meets most of the above points.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Study to Update the Organizational Status, Structure and Delivery Mechanisms of PADIS in the Light of New Techno-Economic Realities

Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee

1. Further to the recommendations of the North Africa Subregional Technical Committee for PADIS and the endorsement of that recommendation by the Regional Technical Committee for PADIS at its third meeting convened 15-16 April 1987 to commission the present study, the following terms of reference have been worked out by a subcommittee appointed by the RTC (hereafter referred to the Ad Hoc Committee). The Ad Hoc Committee consisted of the delegate of Algeria in his capacity as the representative of the North Africa Subregional Technical Committee, UNDP, IDRC and PADIS.

2. The study was considered essential for the following reasons: (a) the needs of member States for information and data are changing rapidly in view of the development challenges they are facing; (b) the means and technologies for information processing and transfer are changing equally rapidly as a result of which new technologies offer solutions that could not have been taken into account at the time PADIS was designed; (c) aspects of the implementation of the PADIS programme at the national level require problem-solving action, particularly in relation to the participation of member States (d) member States, donors and the ECA Secretariat are eager to see PADIS on a much more solid organizational and financial footing for its long-term sustainability; (e) a need has emerged to verify how far the outputs, products and services presently generated by PADIS meet particular needs of end-users; (f) certain areas in which involvement of PADIS (e.g. Arabization) has been minimal for financial reasons can now be dealt with; and, (g) the need to update the design studies for PADIS to harmonize information contained in those documents.

3. The Ad Hoc Committee noted with pleasure that the PADIS Central Co-ordination Office had already received directives to carry out studies with reference to the organizational and long-term financial status of PADIS ("d" of above). It was also noted that a number of studies on user needs, information utilization problems and marketing of information services were scheduled to be conducted during 1987-88 as part of the on-going project. Further to the observations of the present session of the RTC on 15 April, the Ad Hoc Committee noted that the present study was not to curtail any of the scheduled project activities. The Ad Hoc Committee felt that it was desirable to merge the studies

foreseen under the present study with those of the PADIS work programme wherever feasible.

4. The Ad Hoc Committee also noted that there already exist a number of studies and observations which should serve as the premise for certain elements of the desired study. Of particular importance is the Report of the Evaluation mission conduted with the leadership of UNDP during October 1985.

II. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

5. After taking stock of the above realities and concerns, the Ad Hoc Committee arrived at the following terms of reference for the study:

(a) Identification of different organizational formulae for PADIS and analysis of their financial and organizational implications;

(b) Identification of mechanisms for increased participation of member States and profiles of national focal points;

(c) Elaboration of the scope of PADIS;

(d) Structure of the PADIS network;

(e) Study of choice and use of new technologies: hardware, software, telecommunications, etc.

(f) Norms, methodologies and issues of standardization and harmonization;

(g) Identification mechanisms for increasing the contributions of UN Specialized Agencies and international organizations in the areas of activity of PADIS;

(h) Determination of the appropriateness of PADIS products and services in meeting the actual and perceived priority needs of end-users;

(i) Investigation of use of the Arabic language in computer-based information processing and transfer.

III MODALITIES

6. The Ad Hoc Committee further felt that the study should be managed by breaking it into the following component parts: (i) scope, organizational and financial status of PADIS; (ii) structure, networking and technological aspects; (iii) issues related to participation of member States; designation and profiles of focal points and the contributions of international

organizations; (iv) arabization; and (v) appropriateness of products and services.

7. The Ad Hoc Committee found it exigent for the ECA Secretariat/PADIS to carryout the study on the scope, organizational and financial status of PADIS in accordance with the directives laid down by the ECA Executive Secretary for that purpose. The Regional Technical Committee will review the report of that study.

8. It is recommended that PADIS serve as the co-ordinator and secretariat of the study. It will prepare detailed terms of reference for each of the above areas and consult the members of the RTC for comments and observations. PADIS will further identify the experts to be engaged to undertake parts of the study and, in consultation with the members of the RTC Committee, finalize their recruitment.

9. Following intensive discussions on the manner in which the study will be conducted, the Ad Hoc Committee felt that a team of four experts shall carry out the tasks, two of which should be independent African experts. The RTC Committee will be responsible for the selection of the experts upon receipt of nominations from PADIS.

10. The RTC Committee will review the findings of the study and components thereof before finalization and submission to the ECA Executive Secretary and the Regional Technical Committee.

IV. FINANCING

11. The Ad Hoc Committee's tentative estimates put the resources required for the study at between US$70,000 and US$100,000. It was realized that there were resources in the PADIS projects (UNDP/RBA and UNDP/RBAS) that could be used for this purpose, subject to approval of these projects. These resources were estimated at US$ 40,000 to $50,000. Therefore, there is a shortfall of between $30,000 to $50,000. The Ad Hoc Committee strongly recommends that the RTC identifies ways in which the assistance of donors (UNDP, IDRC, and other prospective donors) could be secured.

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Third Meeting of the Regional Technical Committee for PADIS

15 April 1987,
Addis Ababa, Ethipia

COMMISSION ECONOMIQUE POUR L'AFRIQUE

Troisième réunion du Comité technique régional du PADIS

15 avril 1987,
Addis-Abeba, Ethiopie

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